

The Standard Bearer

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Editor-in-Chief: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Mr. John M. Faber, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hando, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Kortering, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Church News Editor: Mr. John M. Faber
1123 Cooper Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

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Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
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Meditation

The Resurrection of the Dry Bones

Rev. J. Kortering

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold they say, Our bones are dried and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel . . . then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it saith the Lord."

Ezekiel 37:11-14

The valley was strewn with dry bones.

They were very dry.

The Prophet Ezekiel was led by the Spirit to observe them. God performed a mighty work upon them, He raised them up, so that they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

This event had historical significance for Israel.

Ezekiel was a prophet of God sent to proclaim the good news of the gospel to the captives in Babylon. The Kingdom of Israel had already been taken captive. This had been followed shortly by an attack upon the cities of Judah under the leadership of the Assyrian captain, Sennacherib. In this assault, Sennacherib took about 200,000 of the inhabitants of Judah into Babylon. Among these captives were Ezekiel and Daniel. Daniel was taken to the capital city, Babylon, while Ezekiel was taken to the rural country in the vicinity of the River Chebar.

The first part of Ezekiel's prophecy concerned itself with the warning that unless Judah repent from its sins of idolatry, God would surely send the enemy to destroy it. While Ezekiel was sounding forth this prophetic warning in Babylon, Jeremiah was proclaiming an identical gospel to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In fact, the first 32 chapters of Ezekiel are very similar to the prophecy of Jeremiah. Even as these servants of God had warned, Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem 11 years later and destroyed the city. Under his leadership the remainder of the Kingdom of Judah was laid waste and the people taken to Babylon.

The faithfulness of Jehovah to His faltering people is demonstrated so beautifully in the words of this text. It would seem that after such faithlessness, God's word to Israel would be that of hopeless condemnation. Surely God could have sent the Prophet Ezekiel to declare, "I told you so! This is what you have coming, O Israel, now I will utterly destroy you from the face of the earth." However, God is longsuffering toward His people. Therefore He sent the Prophet Ezekiel to bring another word to the captives, a gospel that concerned itself with the promise that God would accomplish His desired end through the way of captivity, He would lead His people to repentance and thus bring them back again to the promised land.

The vision of the dry bones demonstrated this so graphically.

The prophet was taken to a large open valley. Before him was the ghastly display of bones. Skeletons of fallen soldiers, disconnected bones were lying on the ground, exceeding dry. This was a picture of Israel. "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel, behold they say, our bones are dried, our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." Israel, referred to here, is not to be distinguished from Judah, rather Israel here is the true seed of the woman, the true name of Jacob the father of the 12 tribes. He had declared, "I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved." These people

of God were indeed troubled. They cast backward a haggard glance of despair. Jerusalem, the city set upon a hill, was destroyed. The gates were burned, the walls were broken down, the houses were plundered, the inhabitants taken away to a strange land. Still worse, the temple was destroyed. The Most Holy Place was profaned, for the treasures of the house of God fattened the coffers of infidels. These lonely saints sat upon the hills of Babylon filled with sorrow. The Babylonians taunted them by requesting them to sing some of Zion's songs, but they answered, "How can we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?" Their bones were dried up, the cause of the Lord seemed doomed, the seed of the woman was overcome, they pined beneath the oppressor's heel. The hope of Israel seemed lost, for Christ could not be born in Babylon.

Yet, we must ask a penetrating question, why were they taken to Babylon? Surely it was not due to the fact that Nebuchadnezzar had a stronger army than Israel, for had not the Lord fought the battles of Israel by few? Neither could the answer be that God had forsaken His people, for He is not a God like the idols of the heathen that may be pre-occupied or distracted thus allowing the surprise attack. His eyes are ever upon His own and His ears are open to their cries. The answer must be found in Israel, she had sinned! God was dealing with Israel in the way of correction. He had sent Nebuchadnezzar as the hand of chastisement which would lead Israel to spiritual renewal in the way of repentance of sin.

This God demonstrated to Ezekiel through the vision.

God resurrects sinners from the dead. He lifts them out of their spiritual graves and brings them to the promised land.

This is clearly shown by 3 distinct stages presented in the vision.

The first is described in verses 1-3. Ezekiel had to observe that the valley was filled with bones of fallen soldiers. This portrayed the true spiritual condition of Israel as she is by nature and as God sees her. These very dry bones cry aloud the truth of total depravity and human inability to save. According to Malachi, "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble and the day that cometh shall burn them up." Ezekiel saw this very really, he saw the evidence of God's wrath upon sin. This applies no less to this present dispensation. God has no mercy, love, or grace for the wicked. Even man's great dreams and mighty attempts to establish a society of man gives evidence not of divine favor, but wrath. Before God, man is nothing more than dry bones, consumed by His wrath.

The second aspect of the vision is recorded in verses 4-6. Ezekiel as God's agent was commanded to prophesy directly to the bones that they hear the word of the Lord. Upon hearing that word they suddenly began to move, each bone connecting to its proper counterpart, receiving muscles, flesh, and skin. At this stage they

were still lying down on the ground, for breath was not yet in them. They had the potential of life, but did not experience it. This conveys the beautiful truth that God is indeed the God of our salvation. By the wonder of His regeneration, He implants in each of His own children the principle of life. Regeneration is the placing of the seed of the new man in the hearts of the elect. By this act, God directly provides them with the potential of life which precedes the actual experience of it.

The final stage of the vision is described in verses 9 and 10. Here Ezekiel must prophesy to the wind to breathe upon these bodies and give them life, with the result that they arise upon their feet, ready to march. This portrays in the vision the actual call of God which brings the living response of faith. Through the preaching of the gospel God calls forth His own unto a living relationship of friendship with Him.

If we view this vision in its totality, we cannot help concluding that the grand theme is that God surely saves His people. Ezekiel must not be afraid that suddenly God has become helpless and that the cause of Israel is lost. Not in the least, for God saves and He does that sovereignly.

We learn from this vision that God performs His work in the hearts of each one of His own. This becomes plain from the relationship between the second and third stages in the vision. Regeneration precedes the calling. When Christ finished His mediatorial work and made complete satisfaction for the sins of His own, He ascended into heaven. Through His Spirit He directs the preaching of the gospel. It is His will that some reprobate do not even hear the word, it is also His will that some hear it and this hearing contributes to the development of their sin. Principally however, the preaching is directed to the elect and redeemed people of God. Now notice carefully that this word is not directed to the natural man who is yet in his sin; rather it is directed to the regenerated child of God who is prepared by God for the preaching of the gospel. Ezekiel had to prophesy to the wind to breathe in the nostrils of those bodies that were prepared for this breath. So Christ also directs the call of His gospel to His regenerated children. This tells us then that since the gospel is not directed to the natural man, the effectiveness of the gospel is not dependent upon natural means. It is not the logic of the gospel as it appeals to natural man that brings about conversion. It is not the persuasiveness of argumentation that moves the will of the natural man. Nor is it the tempo of human emotionalism that activates the christian to cry out, "I believe." Rather, it is the work of Christ whereby He calls to conscious expression that which He already performed before the encounter of the preaching.

Scripture explains this beautifully. The preaching is described as the "sword of the Spirit." When the word is preached, we read that hearts are "pricked." This results in the "opening" of the heart. This is the mighty

resurrection that transpires through the preaching. Christ by His Spirit pricks that heart which is regenerated and through this prick causes it to open up and thus emit the graces of God in Christ. The love of God, mercy of God, and power of God flow forth from the opened heart and this in turn affects the mind to assent to the truth, activates the will to desire to live the truth, and causes the child of God to respond in true joy of salvation.

This is God's work. The Spirit asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" His answer, "Lord God, thou knowest." From the point of view of Ezekiel the prophet, it was impossible. No minister can "win souls for Christ." Did those bones cooperate in their resurrection? The thought is foolish. Likewise there is not and there can not be cooperation between Christ and the sinner in the salvation of his soul. Man at best is nothing but dry bones! The only life that can come forth from dry bones is the infused life from the living God through Christ who is THE Life.

This is the comfort for the church. Ezekiel must preach this gospel of peace. As far as Israel was concerned her cause appeared hopeless. Swallowed up in the obscure confines of Babylon, it seemed as if the cause of Christ was defeated. What alone could allay the fears of the people of God? This, salvation is of the Lord! What He begins He also performs even unto the end. He resurrects from the dead and those whom He resurrects are surely made alive and kept alive unto the end.

Hence the assuring promise, "I will open your graves." This means that God will surely give to His people the grace to repent of their sins and turn from them. Ezekiel and the church of all ages must know that God changes stubborn hearts, and He will do that in all those who are precious in His sight. He will bring them to their knees and cause them to cry out for mercy.

In that way God also promised, "Ye shall know that I am the Lord." Obviously this means not only that they know that God exists, not only that God is the only God, but especially that the God of all salvation is worthy to be feared! We must turn from our evil way and walk in His commandments for God's sake, in order that the glory of our salvation will be His alone.

Then we can understand that these soldiers were ready to walk back to Canaan. This typically represented God's elect returning to God's place of fellowship which in the highest sense of the word is heaven.

Nothing can possibly keep God's inheritance from that desired and promised end.

When the cause of the church appears dark, we, too, must remember that salvation is of the Lord; He shall surely perform it.

Nothing can frustrate that work.

To be saved is to be saved indeed. To God be the glory!

Editorial

The Erring Views of Dr. H.M. Kuitert (2)

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

An Account of Dr. Kuitert's Lecture on the Genesis Question (continued)

In the August issue I reported briefly about Dr. Kuitert's view of the proper exegesis of Genesis 1-3.

The second division of his lecture dealt with the implications of Kuitert's view for the doctrine of Scripture, and about this I now report.

Again, however, I must interject the remark that Kuitert's treatment of this subject was anything but scholarly, even apart from the fact that it was anything but Scriptural and Reformed. One would, even from the point of view of formal scholarship, expect better things from the famous Free University. This should be evident on the very surface. For who would dream of dealing with such an important subject as the doctrine of Scripture and its authority in connection with the entire Genesis-question in the short space of one-third of a 45-minute lecture, and then, too, would attempt to present and support a radically divergent view, besides? I cannot refrain from suggesting that the very attempt was rather foolhardy.

At the same time, Dr. Kuitert succeeded in making known his fundamental approach to Scripture and his attitude toward what he termed the traditional view of Scripture. He also illustrated the boldness with which these new theologians are setting forth their position. They seem to feel secure in their position, to have the confidence that they can get away with what they say without penalty.

What were Kuitert's claims in this connection?

In the first place, he claimed that his alleged exegesis (I say "alleged" because it was no exegesis at all) of Genesis takes the "human element" in Scripture into account. In the second place, in close connection with this, he claimed that he did not want to abandon the authority of Scripture, but only a certain conception of that authority, namely, what he called the traditional conception of that authority. In the third place, he made it plain that he wants to adopt *in toto* the view of Dr. Berkouwer on Holy Scripture. He had high praise for Berkouwer's recent volumes on Scripture and especially for Berkouwer's views on perspicuity, recommending Berkouwer to all and claiming that these were the best volumes Berkouwer has yet written. Along these lines, he made several remarks which, while they point to the fundamental course which Kuitert wants to

follow, nevertheless were far too brief and scant to constitute a treatment of the doctrine of Scripture or even of the implications of Kuitert's view of Genesis for the doctrine of Scripture. One really would have to study Berkouwer in order to understand at all fully Kuitert's view of Scripture. But let me mention a few items. In the first place, he was extremely critical of what he called the traditional view of Scripture. But in his criticism he never defined the so-called traditional view. He did give indications that what he was criticizing was not the traditional view, but a caricature of it. Thus, for example, he mentioned that inspiration does not mean that something drops out of the blue. Not only is this suggestion a caricature of the traditional view, but it is a crude and irreverent one. I know of no traditional view which represents inspiration as something dropping out of the blue. I do know of an inspiration according to which holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. And I do know of "all Scripture" being "God-breathed" or "given by inspiration of God." In this same connection Kuitert accused the traditional view of not doing justice to the human factor in Scripture, and he claimed that orthodoxy has always wanted to keep that human factor as small as possible. They had to acknowledge that human factor, but they wanted to keep it small. They did not know what to do with the human factor. In contrast, Kuitert's presentation of Genesis does justice to this human factor, he claims. Further, Kuitert charged the traditional conception with a wrong view of the authority of Scripture, with a conception of authority which is in conflict with the real authority of Scripture. He accuses the traditional view of always wanting to derive certainty from Scripture, with holding that the Bible must give faith its foundation. He maintained that we must break through this certainty structure. Christ, he said, is the ground of faith. What must be emphasized is the content of the Bible, not its inspiredness apart from the content. He emphasized again and again, both in his lecture and in his replies to questions, his opposition to the idea of a formal authority of Scripture. In reply to one critical question as to perspicuity in connection with his presentation of Genesis, he gave no answer, but in glowing terms recommended Berkouwer. In response to another question, he boldly stated that Moses did not write Genesis. In fact, he scoffed at the very idea that

anyone would believe this today. Again, in response to another question, he made the bold statement that there is no guarantee that the Bible is the Word of God. In response to a question whether Acts 1 must be read in the same way as Genesis 1, he said that the whole Bible must not be read figuratively. There are some figurative parts, some folk stories (a la Koole), and some historical parts (as Acts 1); but even this is not historical in the ordinary sense.

All of these remarks must be understood in the context of the fact that Kuitert adopts Berkouwer's view of Scripture and will speak of authority not in any objective sense, but only in connection with the correlativity of faith and the message of the gospel. Ultimately this is subjectivism. And it is this subjectivism which allows a man like Kuitert to make of Genesis what his imagination leads him to make of it, and to go picking and choosing through Scripture what he will believe and what he will not believe. It is principally the subjectivism of the higher critic, who exalts the authority of his own mind and reason above the authority of God and His Word. The insidious part of it is that Kuitert presents all these ideas as a supposedly Reformed theologian. And the ironic part is that he charges the so-called traditional view with harboring residues of rationalistic tendencies. It reminds one very graphically of what the apostle Paul writes about having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, II Timothy 3:5.

But I must continue my report before engaging in further criticism.

It was especially in the third main division of his lecture that the radical character of Kuitert's erring views came to the fore. Here it became evident that what Kuitert aims at is the destruction of all that has ever been Reformed in dogmatics. He aims at a complete revamping of dogmatics. Moreover, he is completely frank about this; he makes absolutely no effort to hide it.

First of all, he very bluntly stated that his view involved entirely new insights and far-reaching implications for dogmatics over against the traditional view. By the traditional view Kuitert means the creation-fall-redemption scheme. This, according to Kuitert, we must get rid of. There must be a complete re-orientation of dogmatics. Dogmatics has been built up on a creation-fall-redemption scheme; but today we know that this was not a historical pattern. There was no such thing as a paradise situation. Mark what this means! There was no creation as Genesis describes it. There was no garden. There were no trees. There was no Adam and no Eve. There was no Satan and no serpent. There was no temptation and no fall. There was no God Who came and rescued Adam and Eve from the depth of their fall and made known to them the promise of Genesis 3: 15. All this is not a matter of history; and the account of Genesis is not a report of what happened and how it

happened. These are the implications of Kuitert's statement. There was something. Something happened. But it is anyone's guess what it was that happened. Your guess, in fact, is as good as Kuitert's.

It was at this juncture, in the second place, that "the cat came out of the bag" as far as Kuitert's view of Scripture and his motivation and starting-point are concerned. For he stated that theology must "face the facts, face the data." It must confront the historical and scientific data. "You cannot talk the fossils out of existence," he said. It is perfectly obvious, therefore, that it is this alleged scientific and historical data which constitutes Kuitert's authority over against the authority of Scripture, and which moves him not only to revamp all of dogmatics but also to "exegete" Genesis 1-3 in such a way that it fits in with this alleged historical and scientific data.

In the third place, although chronologically this came a little later in his speech, Kuitert accuses what he calls traditional dogmatics of being unable to connect creation and Christ. He made reference to the fact that Barth in his dogmatics ties creation and Christ together; but he made the very bold claim that the Christian church never knew what to do with passages like Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1: 15, ff. For the benefit of the reader, let me quote the passages in question. In Ephesians 1: 9, 10 we read: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." But especially did Kuitert refer several times to Colossians 1: 15-19: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Kuitert made reference to the fact that some have explained Colossians 1 as referring simply to the Second Person of the Trinity as such, while Paul was evidently speaking of the role of Christ in creation. But he emphatically insisted that the Christian church, our Reformed fathers included, never knew what to do with passages like these and that they failed to connect Christ and creation. And, of course, the obvious implication was that this was due to the fact that they held the traditional view of Genesis and the traditional creation-fall-redemption scheme in dogmatics.

I will not comment on this point now, but will return to it in my criticism later.

Finally, if you ask whether Dr. Kuitert attempted to

furnish anything positive concerning the dogmatical implications of his view, the answer is that he did, but that he was very vague as to any details. He maintained that the creation story of Genesis is interpretive. It is a "teaching model." We must unravel it from the historical. If we want to use the model of Genesis 1-3 today, we must not use it as an account of how things happened. Nor must we speak with Barth of "saga." We must see it as a teaching model. How can this model be used? Can the creation story be told as the story of development, of evolution (here for the first time he used the term "evolution")? Yes; we can apply it as follows. First of all, we must learn to see the whole of our history as the course of God's action. God the Creator is not something of the past, but He has to do with the present and the future. Secondly, sin is the negative, the "contra." It is regression, reversion to what we ought not to be. Note, by the way, that this is the language of evolutionism. In the question period Kuitert was very vague and evasive when he was asked from what position we have first progressed if sin is reversion and regression. Thirdly, Christ nullifies that regression. He deflects what interferes with history. He completes the development. He is the measure of creation as history, as progress. A cross of Christ is necessary,

according to Kuitert, but he was very vague on this and did not offer any clear explanation of the place of the cross in his view. During the question period he conceded that terms like "expiation" and "propitiation" must not be left out because they are Biblical terms. He claimed to believe these terms too. But he did not explain what place they had in his view, and he quickly added that they were not the only words about Christ in the Bible.

Dr. Kuitert summed up this part of his speech by stating that there are many problems left with regard to the development of the dogmatical implications of his view. And he concluded by speaking in vague generalities of a panorama unfolding and of life becoming meaningful under this view.

Thus, briefly, Dr. Kuitert presented his views. As I said before, I have prepared this account only from my own notes, taken hastily during the lecture. In the nature of the case, I was unable to write down all the details, especially since Dr. Kuitert spoke rather rapidly and because his English was very difficult to catch sometimes. Nevertheless, I am certain that I have presented the thrust of his remarks accurately.

A critical evaluation of this address and related matters will follow.

All Around Us

THE WORLD COUNCIL AT UPPSALA

Prof. H. Hanko

It was, according to all reports, a drab and colorless meeting. There was little new, little that had not been said before and probably said better, little advance in the cause of world-wide ecumenicity. There would be little point in reporting on it except that The World Council of Churches has become an issue within the churches of the Reformed tradition. At present the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands have decided that, while they will not join for the present, there is no real reason why they cannot join. And the Christian Reformed Church, although they have repudiated membership in the WCC, sent observers to this year's meeting in Uppsala, Sweden.

The meeting lasted for sixteen days and the Council listened to no less than 75 speeches and attempted to digest about 10 tons of mimeographed reports and statements.

The opening address to the 750 delegates was made by Dr. D. T. Niles, a universalist of the Methodist Church. He was substituting for the murdered Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. He addressed the council on its theme: "Behold I make all things new." But the speaker as well as the Council as a whole made it very clear that all things must be made new by man and not by Christ. They reiterated their firm conviction that this newness of all things would come about through world revolution and through finding solutions to the world's problems, in order to usher in a utopia of the earth. All the speeches and papers pointed in this direction.

Some of the more interesting examples:

James Baldwin, the negro American novelist, addressed the assembly on the problem of the races. He told the delegates that the churches had betrayed black Christians; that "the destruction of the Christian church as it is today may not only be necessary but desirable"; that "the church began in revolution and will probably have to be reborn in revolution." Although he is an agnostic, his views were quite generally acceptable to the Council. He spoke in defense of Stokely Carmichael and insisted that black power advocates were not as

dangerous as many whites in the United States and South Africa.

In another speech, Barbara Ward, a British economist, proposed a world tax of one per cent of the gross national product of each nation to help the poor and hungry nations.

As far as decisions were concerned, social issues almost completely dominated the assembly. The delegates approved of the principle of selective conscientious objection and urged nations to adopt proposals for a Peace Corps as an alternative to military service. The American delegates, some 200 strong, voiced their support of four men (including Dr. Benjamin Spock and Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr.) who have been found guilty by the courts for violating the Selective Service laws by aiding men in escaping the draft. By doing this the delegates supported the principle of civil disobedience at any time a man disagrees with a particular law.

The Council also once more demanded that Communist China be admitted to the United Nations. The delegates did not vote outright for a proposal which condemned American Vietnam policies, but it did adopt a resolution calling for immediate and unconditional cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam by American planes. And it made a plea to both sides in the conflict to end their military activities.

The question of union with Rome was also high on the agenda. The recent papal "confession of faith" (Cf. below) cast a shadow over this part of the proceedings, but the Council moved ahead in the only way possible under the circumstances. The Roman Catholic Church

had various observers present at Uppsala, but no formal plans for union could yet be made. Jesuit Roberto Tucci addressed the Council but said that psychological and practical obstacles bar a union in the immediate future. He did propose that the WCC and the Vatican jointly study the advantages and disadvantages of Roman Catholic membership in the WCC. This proposal was endorsed by the delegates and nine Roman Catholic theologians were appointed to the World Council's staff.

Strangely enough it was the Russian delegates, branded by many as being Communist agents within the World Council, who complained most loudly about the lack of theological concern in the assembly. The well-known Metropolitan Nikodim opposed a Western proposal for broadening "Marxist-Christian dialogue" on the grounds: "How can there be dialogue when the basic beliefs of one are denied by the other?" A delegate of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America expressed disappointment and disillusionment that there was almost no theological discussion at the Council. And it was the Orthodox bloc which voted for a conservative (by council standards) report on the reforming of Christian liturgy.

How anyone who has the love of the Church of Christ in his heart can imagine that this organization is representative of the unity of the body of Christ is an insoluble mystery. The WCC is a powerful, noisy, and influential representative of apostate Christianity and dreadful omen of the role which the apostate church shall play in the future.

POPE PAUL'S CONSERVATISM

If Pope John XXIII opened the windows of the Roman Catholic Church to the winds of change, Pope Paul is determined to slam them shut once again. At the continuation of the Vatican Council meeting over which Pope Paul presided after the death of his predecessor, it was supposed that Paul might follow the example of John — although many suspected that the vigor of John would be lost. They have been badly disappointed.

Two recent events have demonstrated this.

Marking the end of the Roman Catholic Year of Faith, the Pope addressed some remarks to his church concerning the faith of the church in this age. In affirming the position he occupies as successor of Peter, he used these statements to make "a profession of faith, pronounce a creed which, without being strictly speaking a dogmatic definition, repeats in substance, with some developments called for by the spiritual condition of our time, the Creed of Nicea, the creed of the immortal tradition of the Holy Church of God."

Paul insisted on his own authoritative position in the church as Vicar of Christ and used this position to reaffirm some traditional doctrines which the Romish

Church has held to, but which are coming increasingly under attack. He followed chiefly the general outline of the Apostle's Creed, but directed his remarks especially to those who, within his own church, have shown a strong desire to go in the way of modern theological liberalism.

In doing all this he filled the liberals within his own church and ecumenical leaders of Protestantism with dismay. It was generally interpreted as an attempt to keep the Romish Church bound up in the traditions of the past and to protect the church from the threat of renewal and possible union with Protestantism.

Then, in the early part of August, the Pope added insult to injury when he came out with his decisions on the question of birth control. This question had assumed increasing importance in the church, and the pope had appointed a commission to study the matter in the light of modern contraceptive developments. This commission worked for three years and presented their opinions. It is reported that the recommendations of the commission were that the traditional stand of the Romish Church be altered, the stand that the use of all

contraceptive devices is a violation of natural law and is therefore a "mortal sin." Essentially the commission wanted to make the use of contraceptives a matter of conscience. But Paul rejected out of hand the advice of his commission and reaffirmed in the strongest possible language the traditional stand of the Church. He insisted that this was the stand of the church in the past, that there were no reasons for altering it, that this was the position of the church today, and that all members of his church must adhere to this pronouncement of the pope who speaks as the Vicar of Christ, that failure to do so will involve one in mortal sin. The encyclical in which this position was set forth fell short of an infallible pronouncement of the pope speaking *ex cathedra*, but all the authority of the papal chair lies behind it nonetheless. Paul addressed himself to his own members, to governments around the world urging them to cease taking an active role in birth control programs and to scientists to whom he assigned the task of making the rhythm method (approved by the Romish Church) a scientifically safe method of birth control.

His pronouncements aroused a storm of protest. So much so that Paul called a special "press conference" to tell the world and his church how much suffering the decision had caused him but how deeply he felt about it.

It is estimated that as high as 60% of Roman Catholic married couples make use of artificial birth control devices. And most of them are not about to bow before the latest papal pronouncement. But this puts them in a most serious dilemma. A mortal sin is a serious matter and will have to be confessed in the confessional. Many are hoping that priests who disagree with the stand of the pope simply will not ask questions concerning this matter of those who appear in the confessional; but one

theologian has described the situation as "a crisis of conscience" to which the people should not be subjected.

But even many clergy and theologians in this country and in Europe were shocked and dismayed. Already in Europe a committee of clergymen is sending a protest to the pope and in it firmly insists on their right to dissent. In this country too many clergy are already assuring their troubled parishioners that they have every intention of disregarding the pope's position.

And so the question really comes down to one of the authority of the church. Many leaders in the Roman Catholic Church thought that this question had been decided when the last Vatican Council defined, apparently with Paul's approval, the extent of papal authority and transferred much of it to the church's bishops. But now Paul is flying in the face of these decisions and pulling the reins of absolute authority out of the hands of the lesser clergy and grasping them firmly with his own. It is this which troubles Roman Catholics most deeply. They do not want an autocratic pope who can speak and expect the whole church to bow in humble submission and admiration.

It is difficult to tell who will prevail for the present. There are enough clergy who disagree to make this issue of birth control the focal point of the struggle for authority. Some are already talking about the possibility of schism in the ranks of Roman Catholicism. But Paul is old. He may be able to close the windows in the church part way and keep out the winds of change. But others will follow. The windows will be thrown open once again. The pressures of union with Protestantism are too great from both sides to be resisted permanently.

Trying the Spirits

The *Really* NEW Morality?

Rev. R.C. Harbach

Modern liberal religion is a philosophy of ethics and morality. In fact, liberal interpretation makes ethics and morals of central importance in the shade of which stands religion, faith and practice. The biblical and theological religion of redemption is reduced to a social ethic, with Jesus Christ the paragon of ethicists. Not the saving power of God, but the spiritual competence of man is the important element in the modern gospel. It propagates a social gospel which concerns itself with the

ethical problems of the present life. God and the world to come are matters of personal opinion. Man's chief end is to increase in the knowledge of love and the practice of right.

This modern thought is a form of pantheism, the idea that all men are divine, and God is present in and identified with the whole world. Pantheism, because it is a naturalistic philosophy, secularizes all of life, even secularizes God, so that it is a kind of religious atheism.

Then since God is everything and everything is God, there is no such thing as morality or sin. The present craze for liquor, lust and LSD, given a religious facade, is claimed to be man's new quest for God; sin is a groping for God. The voice of atheism and man's natural urges are the voice of God in the soul. Drunkenness, sexual promiscuity and "trips" on exotic drugs are expressions of man's right of self-indulgence in search for the more abundant life. Hippyism is a brave effort to expand the soul, blaze a trail through unexplored regions, and attain exciting new experiences. The sloppy attire, the unkempt appearance and the attendant life of debauchery are a quest for life, a quest for God. Where there is, all too often, deviation from pure "flower power" to ugliness, dinginess, horror and murder, trampling on the good, the true and the beautiful, man's reeking, bloody footsteps only mark a blundering trend toward God. If Paul were here he would say that such questing for "God" is no more than a sacrificing to demons. And if Isaiah were here he would call it a making a covenant with death.

Since modern thought denies the infallible, verbal, plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, there is for liberalism no absolute standard of truth, neither in doctrine nor in life. The Bible and the system of truth derived therefrom, and all concepts of morality, are but the result of man's thinking. There is therefore no objective rule for right and wrong. Back in 1915, Dr. James H. Tufts, head of the department of philosophy in the University of Chicago, said, "The newer ethics is itself yet uncertain . . . It does not know exactly what justice is." (The Biblical World, p. 13) Neither did Plato, as his *Republic* reveals. Nor does modern man, from the Hippies to the religious liberals. "There is none that understandeth, they are all gone out of the way."

Moral principles, it is claimed, are not developed from divine revelation, but are mere products of evolution, and so are in continual flux. Part of the evolutionary development of man's morality is his abrogation or changing of existing rules of ethics. The law of God is a product of the human mind, and so may be broken or ignored. The result is a trend back to savagery. Where religious liberalism used to advocate Jesus as a leading moral exemplar, now it advocates, "Indulge your instincts." The "truth" is only a pragmatic slogging along in the rut of contemporary expediencies, is but a do-it-yourself manufacture as one stumbles along. The worst kind of so called realism invades the magazines, paperbacks, novels, high school and college required reading, lecture halls, movies, theater and TV. So that three great evils prevail, fraud, immorality and violence. Back in 1920, Philadelphia's Rabbi Krauskopf said, "Many who are pleasure mad and indulge in the social depravities of today know that their excesses and indecencies and immoralities are iniquitous, but they have no longer the will power to withstand them." (Modern Religious Liberalism, Horsch, 121) In this same

period, the famous Dr. Howard A. Kelly expressed concern over man's "moral bankruptcy . . . the minimizing the value of human life, the pleasure mad habits of our people, and the ever increasing amount of dishonesty . . . the inevitable . . . immorality of the sexes and its consequent train of diseases . . . Thank God these terrible diseases are not quite so universal in America as on the continent of Europe, but they are bad enough." (ibid.) But today, where the USA is only a few years behind aping Europe in certain evils, it takes the lead in making other evils the fashion. New York's Rabbi Wise said fifty-four years ago, "Nearly all men and women were shocked when the wretched modern dances were perpetuated for the first time." Dr. John Haynes Holmes, a leading liberal minister in 1920 said, "Dancing today, even among our so called 'best people,' is indecent . . . We noticed all kinds of dances and postures which, . . . in the New York slum districts . . . chaperons . . . forbid as immoral. Nowhere in our social life today is there such evidences of degeneracy as" (with) "the dance . . . The music is barbaric, the dressing immodest and the dances brutally sexual." What he also said then of the Broadway stage could also just as warrantably be said of today's television. It "is crowded with women who are actresses only in the sense that they are willing to expose their nakedness to the public gaze, and with men whose only qualifications are the ability to tell a dirty joke in a dirty way." The following is also from 1920. Would it more pointedly apply to the theater, the movie or television? "Marital infidelity has always been a 'legitimate' dramatic motive, but formerly it was suggested, not shown. Today it is given to us in full detail, and our authors and producers have come to look upon seduction and rape as perfectly legitimate material for frank depiction before miscellaneous audiences." The world swills all this in the name of art.

Religious liberalism used to say that there is no religion but morality. Then religion was displaced with humanistic ethics, and now both are substituted for a "new" morality. Another liberal religious writer complained that "the authority of the message is gone; we are left without any authority, religion is adrift and optimism is pure speculation. We are hastening through our modern liberalism into conditions of religious dissolution." Another liberal professor adjudged that "we are fast drifting into a cultured paganism. — In fifty years crime has increased four hundred percent. Something must be done to underpin the virtues of our people." Now, forty-eight years later, ours is not a Christian nation, but one of "cultured paganism," (although paganism, not heathenism, was always cultured) with crime still increasing, and modern liberalism pouring oil on the fires by encouraging civil disobedience.

In that same 1920 an eyewitness of Socialism in Australia related how the advantages of legislation for

the benefit of women and children were realized, the long-sought eight-hour day installed, the labor party in power, and everything then expected to be happy and beautiful in a socialist state. But "in the streets of Sydney I saw more drunken men and women than I ever saw in Chicago, and the whole community was getting the . . . something-for-nothing attitude. Why, you could see whole groups stand in line on Saturday afternoon waiting to bet a portion of their week's wages in government protected lotteries. A greater illegitimate birth rate prevails there than in any other nation of which we have record, and a lower general birth rate in the cities than of any nation of which we have record. Why? Material prosperity. Seven million people fringed around an area as large as the United States."

Maxim Gorki, one of the world's leading Communists, revolutionary protagonist, donor of Gorki Awards to best Communist revolutionary authors in the U.S., wrote, "What alarms me most is the fact that the social revolution does *not* bring with it any sign of spiritual regeneration among men. It does not seem to be making men more honest. It is *not* lifting their self-esteem nor the moral value of their labor . . . one does not notice among the masses that the revolution has lifted or quickened their social conscience. Human life is appraised just as cheaply as it was before. The habits of the old regime are *not* disappearing. The new authorities are just as brutal as the old ones were and, in the bargain, their manners are worse. The new officials permit themselves to be bribed just as easily, and they send men to prison in herds as the old did. Physical

force has merely been transferred. But this does not in any way help the growth of new spiritual forces among us. The rectification of wrong can *only* come through the development of our spiritual forces." (ital., RCH) Advocates of the American social gospel have long claimed it impossible to be a Christian in a non-socialized commonwealth. But the Communist Gorki has testified that Socialism and Communism produce the exact opposite of anything Christian.

"T. Robert Ingram writes in *The World* under God's Law (39): 'There is the recent expose in Congress of the list of reading material approved by the National Council of Churches, which included books so obscene that the offending material was not even read aloud in the House of Representatives. What ever may have been the explanation, it is an unshakable fact that the National Council of Churches gave religious sanction to the distribution of lascivious literature.' (*Baal or God*, 334)

The New Morality is not really new. It can be traced back to the line of Cain. For "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, 'See! This is new!?' it hath been already of old time, which was before us." (Eccles. 1:9,10) Not new, but certainly much more advanced in the complexities of evil since its beginning, even of the beginning of its American form at the turn of the century. For proof, read in Herman J. Otten's *Baal or God* the chapter on The Law of God.

In His Fear

Blest With Hunger

Rev. John A. Heys

To be hungry is one thing.
To go away hungry is another.

Jesus said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Matthew 5:5 And the glory of the new Jerusalem is described in Revelation 7:15,16 in the words, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."

Blessed are they that hunger And yet the

blessedness of the new Jerusalem is such that its inhabitants shall not hunger any more.

But is it not true even in our natural life that hunger is a good sign? A mother notices something is wrong with her child when that child no longer has any hunger. A healthy child has a strong appetite and seems to be hungry all the time. Hunger is the desire and the awareness of a need for food. Blessed are they that are aware of the need of the righteousness of Christ: for they shall be filled. Sad is the condition of those who know not this need, who know not their misery, their unrighteousness before God, and know not the joyful

sound of the gospel. Blessed are they that hunger with desire also for the Word of God, for they shall not go away hungry. There will be hunger in the Holy City in the sense that there will be the awareness of and desire for spiritual food. There will be no hunger in the sense that any in that city shall go away hungry.

We would do well to examine our spiritual appetite both for righteousness and for the Bread of life. We may find that we are not too healthy spiritually and are quite content to go away hungry, that is, go away empty of the blessings of God's kingdom. We may find that we are too eager for the things of this world, so that we have no time even and room for the spiritual.

At the moment we are with many who are blest with hunger. Indeed, here on the island of Jamaica they also hunger for earthly bread and go away hungry. Although there are signs of some improvement in living conditions of the brethren and sisters of the churches of Revs. Elliott, Frame and Ruddock, the need is still evident and great. Many know what it is to go away hungry for the needs of this life. And this concerns us. We have expressed to each other our compassion for them. They are to be pitied when they go away hungry. But we must not have one smallest part of pity for them in regard to their hunger for the truth. Instead we repeat the words of Jesus, Blessed they are in their hunger for righteousness and for Christ Who is their righteousness. They do not go away hungry; and they have again this year confessed that they are richly fed with the truth, which they have learned to call, "The Reformed Faith."

We left for Jamaica — Mr. and Mrs. Thys Feenstra, my wife and I — June 25 and began our labors with a service at First Hill, Lucea, Wednesday evening, June 26. For the hungry souls assembled the Bread of Life, as it is found in Isaiah 40:1,2, was broken that night.

They ate that spiritual food and went away satisfied. And we left with a sense of thankfulness that once again we might present the Word to them as they had never heard it before they came in contact with our churches. It is July 15 today, and in a span of less than three weeks we have preached 11 times, met with three groups — from Port Maria and Islington on the eastern end of the island to Lucea on the west to show them some colored slides which we took of them last year, and of American scenes, especially from our home town, Holland, Michigan, according to promise. Two years ago we began to conduct a correspondence course with these brethren and sisters on this island and introduced to them the five points of Calvinism, using the word TULIP to help them remember the first letter of each point and thus the five points themselves. They were eager to see what a real tulip looked like. And last year we took pictures along to show them, but were unable to rent or use a projector. So this time we took along the excess baggage of our projector and showed them tulips of many kinds and colors and used these pictures to remind them of the truth expressed in

these five points. They had not forgotten, and enjoyed seeing the tulips. Electricity is to be found only in the Port Maria and Lucea church. So in Islington we were given the use of a Baptist church; and in Reading, Lacovia, before a Wednesday evening service, we plan to make use of a school. Even then we are experiencing some difficulty because of the power shortage here in Jamaica. The papers furnish a schedule of what hours the power will be shut off; but this schedule is only another matter in Jamaica to disregard. It is not adhered to with any certainty. This was no small source of inconvenience for us at first. For our first two weeks were spent in three cottages that had electric stoves; and we had to get used to candle light by nightfall — which here is 7:15 P.M. — and to having our dinner partly cooked or just started only to have to improvise with something cold. But now we are settled under a different arrangement in the same place which we had last year, which was not available before, and we cook with gas. And upon returning home we probably will have a good picture of our breakfast cook, Mr. Feenstra, preparing our pancakes. He really does know how.

Our first Sunday we spent with Rev. Elliott at Mahoe — a two hours drive from Islington. And that was a real mountain drive. We thought last year that we had climbed the steepest; but this one takes all the skill and experience of one accustomed to mountain driving. We did it without incident and are thankful that the concern whose car we rented last year reserved for us this year a brand new Ford Cortina that had only 240 miles on it when we took possession. It is a joy to drive it on these narrow and steep roads. Here again in Mahoe the Word was received by eager and attentive ears. Wednesday evening was spent at Port Maria and Thursday evening at Buff Bay. Mahoe is up the mountains from Buff Bay and required footpower mountain climbing as well as auto power. Sunday, July 7 was set aside for a morning service at Reading, West Lacovia and an evening service up the mountains again on a very rough road to Northhampton Mountain. This was again a very full day. For we left here at 8 A.M. for a two hour drive to Reading, had our morning service, returned to our car for a packed lunch, and then returned for an afternoon meeting at which we first played a tape of greetings of the Mission Committee members, which they had prepared at our last meeting before we left for Jamaica. The people were glad for this personal touch and contact with our people whom they had not yet met. Smiles were also to be seen when the voice of Mr. Meulenberg, whom they did meet face to face some years ago, came to their ears from the recorder. We then sat down with them — rather than to preach to them from the pulpit — and gathered them around us to discuss Psalm 23. To us this gave a new and wonderful feeling of unity with them in the truth but also of thankfulness for the opportunity to discuss God's Word with them. We used the catechetical approach of

questioning them and answering their questions in regard to the text, applying their answers to their life. We did this the three Sundays thus far; and these Jamaican brethren and sisters also seemed to enjoy this form of instruction very much. And they know their Bible! Make no mistake about that. That also is our point of contact with them. Just begin to quote a text in a sermon, and they will quote the rest with you. This is invaluable for instruction. You can forget your outline and explain to them what they themselves are quoting with you.

That they hunger for the truth — not because they do not know their Bible but because they desire the richer presentation of that truth, the Gospel as it is in Christ — is evident from how they follow you. The group at Reading followed us to Northhampton Mt. And to our consternation but also pleasant surprise they were at Lucea this last Sunday, leaving at 5 in the morning and returning back at 9 to be home about 11 P.M. You cannot fill their desire for the truth. They do not walk away as those who have no more appetite. They ask for more.

July 10 — O yes let it be pointed out that the service at Buff Bay was on the Fourth of July, an ordinary day here and no holiday, but a different Fourth from what we would have had on that holiday in the States — we were at Johnstontown and Thursday at Waterworks. Sunday we were at Lucea and experienced another of these torrential rains. It delayed our Psalter sing which the Hope Herald prepared for these brethren and sisters and our discussion of Psalm 23 in Lucea. But it did cool off our day as well as give the fields some much needed moisture.

There is, we believe, a marked improvement in the Psalter singing since the last shipment of Psalters. But

many more Psalters are needed; and gradually they do add a new song. Some of the numbers they do sing are 10, 161 with their own tune, 200, 221, 278, 381, 383 and 408. We try in our sermons to refer to the truths in these Psalter numbers, for we feel here too that we have a point of contact, and an opportunity to give further instruction and explanation.

Our schedule for the week ahead calls for preaching at Mt. Lebanon Wednesday evening and Shrewsbury Thursday evening. The rest of the week we expect to be busy with the shipment of clothing that is due to arrive between July 11 and 16. We need not go to Kingston for this and thus our preaching schedule will not be disrupted by these necessary but mundane things. We expect to have it shipped by rail to Montego Bay where we can be present when customs examines it and then distribute it to the three groups of churches. The three ministers can come to Montego Bay and arrangement for trucks can be made for the local areas.

The time does not drag but has flown by thus far and we expect the last two thirds of our stay to be the same. There is much instruction that can yet be given. The surface has only been scratched. Especially as far as the children are concerned there is a tremendous field here for giving instruction in the truth which we have been blessed to know and enjoy all these years. This is even true of the children in the hills who do not belong to the churches of Revs. Elliott, Frame and Ruddock. And we have been contacted by two ministers of other groups who attended our services about closer affiliation with us. A school established here on the island would be attended not only but be a blessing to these people of another color and race who have the same God and Lord and salvation.

Examining Ecumenicalism

“THE DUTCH MEET DIXIE”(II)

Rev. G. Van Baren

The proposed plan of union between the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern Presbyterian) is a rather lengthy doctrine of some 97 pages. For those interested, this plan of union in booklet form is available in Presbyterian or Reformed Church Book Stores for 25c. I would point out in this and subsequent articles various features in this proposed union which certainly could not be acceptable to any truly Reformed man. There are

those in the Reformed Church in America who also firmly believe this. In a radio interview over WFUR in Grand Rapids, the Rev. Gordon Girod of the Seventh Reformed Church in that city stated that there are Reformed churches in the Midwest that have already decided that they can not go along with any merger even for the one-year requirement of the merger proposal.

Apart from the question whether these two de-

nominations maintain the same basic Calvinistic doctrinal confession, the proposed plan of union is itself unacceptable to the Reformed Christian.

Hierarchical church government

There are presently men and ministers in the Reformed Church who continue to hold to the fundamental truths of the Reformed Confessions — even though the denomination as a whole has, to a large degree, departed from these. Such men remain within the Reformed denomination because, they contend, each local church remains fairly autonomous. A local church can refuse to go along with such decisions of the Synod with which it can not agree. However, the proposed plan of union places the power and authority in the higher bodies — and the local consistory must submit. It is this feature which many in the Reformed Church find very objectionable. Some instances of this follow:

A minister, according to the present practice in Presbyterian churches, will be considered a member of the Presbytery (equivalent to our Classis) rather than of the local consistory, and is accountable to it.

15-2. A minister shall hold his membership in the Presbytery where his work is located, unless there are reasons satisfactory to his Presbytery why he should not do so. The Presbytery may give a Minister permission to labor outside its geographical bounds and in work not under its jurisdiction; but no Minister shall engage in work which is within the bounds of and which falls properly under the jurisdiction of another Presbytery without its consent.

The power of the Presbytery is also set forth in paragraph 15.8:

The Presbytery has power:

- (1) To receive and decide references, appeals and complaints brought before it according to constitutional procedures.
- (2) To assume original jurisdiction in cases in which a Session cannot exercise its authority.
- (3) To review the records of Consistories, redress whatever they may have done contrary to order, and take effectual care that they observe the Constitution of the Church.
- (4) To see that the lawful injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed.
- (5) To visit churches for the purpose of inquiring into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them. When necessary for the welfare of the Church, the Presbytery may dissolve the active relationship between an Elder and the church, provided there has been a hearing which affords procedural safeguards as in cases of process
- (6) To unite or divide churches, at the request of the members thereof.
- (7) To organize new churches.
- (8) To receive and dismiss churches.
- (9) To dissolve churches, after hearing which pro-

vides adequate procedural safeguards, when the Presbytery finds that the interest of the Church imperatively demands such dissolution.

(10) To control the location of new churches and of churches desiring to move to new locations.

(11) To take special oversight of churches without Pastors, and appoint a Minister of the Presbytery to preside over the Consistory in such churches.

(12) To receive under its care Candidates for the Ministry.

(13) To ordain, receive, dismiss, install, remove, and judge Ministers.

(14) To establish the pastoral relationship; and to dissolve it at the request of one or both parties, or, when it finds that the purity and peace of the Church imperatively demand it, following hearing which provides procedural safeguards as in cases of process

(15) To set apart Ministers as Teachers, Evangelists, and in other works proper to the ministry.

(16) To require Ministers to devote themselves diligently to their sacred calling and to censure the delinquent.

(17) To devise measures for the enlargement of the Church within its bounds.

(18) To condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the Church.

(19) To encourage whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care.

(20) To institute and superintend the agencies necessary for its work.

(21) To appoint Commissioners to the General Assembly.

(22) To overture the Synod or the Assembly for such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church.

Now a careful study of the above would reveal, of course, that many of the "powers" of the Presbytery will be similar to those which a Classis normally exercises. However, there are also many "powers" which the Reformed man has always maintained are to be rightly exercised only by the Consistory. Particularly it is to be noted that the Presbytery assumes the right of initiating discipline of members, ministers, and churches within its jurisdiction. It has the "power" also of seeing to it that "lawful injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed." Such a "power" would not bode well for a local church, for instance, which can not for conscience sake make use of some of the liberal and modernistic Sunday School materials presently produced within these two denominations.

The denomination also claims the property of a local church if such church decides to withdraw from the denomination:

6.6. . . . If a particular church withdraws from the communion and discipline of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in America, or if a church is dissolved by the Presbytery, or if a church otherwise ceases to exist, those who hold the title to the property shall deliver, convey and transfer to the Presbytery of which the church was a member, or to the authorized agents

of the Presbytery, all property of the church; and the receipt and acquittance of the Presbytery, or its proper representatives, shall be a full and complete discharge of all liabilities of such persons holding the property of the church. The Presbytery receiving such property shall apply the same or the proceeds thereof for the purposes of the Church at its discretion.

It might be noted, however, that provision is made for any dissenting congregation to remove itself from the new denomination within a specified time without the penalty of loss of property. The procedure to be followed is very precisely outlined. The decision states in part:

Article 17. Withdrawal Provision — Congregation and Property.

It is agreed as a part of the Plan of Union between the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, for the purposes of this union alone, that any particular church under the jurisdiction of either body may petition the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in America for leave to withdraw from the Presbyterian Reformed Church in America with its property, but only after full and complete compliance with the following procedure:

17.01. No particular church shall take any action regarding such petition to withdraw before the first, or after the second anniversary of the effective date of the union, except as hereinafter provided in case of reversal on appeal.

According to this provision, all churches of both denominations would be obliged to remain in the united church for a period of one year. Then for a one year period any church can remove itself from the union by

following certain stipulations listed in the plan of union. I would assume that the purpose of this one-year enforced union would be to give all the churches and membership of these churches an opportunity to observe the new denomination in action for one year. Possibly, too, a one-year "cooling off" period would reduce the possibility of large numbers of churches forsaking the new denomination.

At the last Synod and General Assembly an amendment was also offered and adopted which provides for a guarantee for escape later if this new denomination should subsequently decide to merge with other denominations. There were those in the Reformed Church who expressed misgivings concerning the present discussions carried on in the Consultation for Church Union of which the Southern Presbyterian Church is a part. Therefore the following amendment was also adopted:

In the event of the union of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in America with any other ecclesiastical body, adequate provision shall be made in any plan of union to permit the withdrawal from the union of any congregation of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in America with its property in such manner and such procedures as shall be equitable. Equitable provisions regarding ministers desiring to withdraw from such new denomination shall also be made.

In a subsequent article I hope to point out other unacceptable provisions (for any Reformed person) which will become effective if this plan of union is finally adopted.

In Memoriam

**Reverend Gerrit Vos,
1894-1968, Called Home**



When asked by the editor of our *Standard Bearer* to write this obituary article in memory of our late Rev. Vos, I consented gladly. It was more than forty years ago that I met Rev. Vos for the first time. He was a

student at that time in our seminary. I also met him several times at our home in Chicago during those early years of our churches.

Rev. Vos was ordained in September of 1927. He

served the following churches: Sioux Center, Iowa; Hudsonville, Michigan; Redlands, California; and Edgerton, Minnesota. He served our Hudsonville church twice, his second term of service there following his ministry in Edgerton in the years 1948 to 1966, and his first ministry there extending from 1929 to 1932. He became minister emeritus in 1966. Rev. Vos died at the age of 73. The reason why he served the church in Sioux Center only two years, from 1927 to 1929, was because, although ordained in 1927, he returned to Michigan in 1929 in order to finish his schooling in our seminary. During those early years of our churches' existence there was a crying need for ministers, and Rev. Vos was pressed into service before he had finished his schooling at our seminary.

Rev. Vos was unique in his preaching and teaching. The remark has often been made, "There is only one Rev. Vos!" How true is this statement! Many of us will remember the unique style of the meditations which he wrote for our *Standard Bearer*. When the late Rev. Hoeksema became sick in 1947 and was forced to lay down some of his activities, Rev. Vos was appointed to write the meditations. He performed this task nobly, and his meditations were always enjoyed. But Rev. Vos's contributions to our magazine began many years earlier; he was one of the first associate editors of the *Standard Bearer*. For many years in this capacity he wrote on the Psalms in the Holland language. His style and mannerisms were peculiarly his own.

He knew and loved the Reformed truth. Ordained a minister of the gospel in 1927, he was 32 years old when he became a minister of the Word of God. Of him it may therefore be said that he lived through the years of 1920 through 1924, the years which form the background of the history of our churches. He was always faithful and true to the truth which our churches proclaim and which we know to be according to the Word of God. He understood that truth and surely loved it with all his heart. He was also a guiding light at our ecclesiastical assemblies, at classical and synodical meetings. How often it occurred that we looked to him to formulate motions and lead us through many problems and difficulties!

Rev. Vos had not been in the best of health for many years. It was thirteen and a half years ago that he had his first heart attack. However, he continued his activities in our church of Hudsonville and in among our churches. Finally he was forced to accept emeritus

status in 1966. Our hearts were saddened when he was compelled to lay down his work. How often he was asked to continue his labors in our churches at least to some extent. But his answer was always negative.

In addition to his own physical troubles, he was also burdened at home. We now refer to the condition of his beloved wife. For many years she has suffered because of many infirmities and miseries. He felt very keenly that it was his calling to care for her who had always stood so faithfully at his side. This explains why he hardly ever attended our worship services. These appearances at our worship services were limited to the times when we celebrated the Lord's Supper. For the rest, he listened to our services in his home.

Rev. Vos is no longer with us. When the writer of these lines received the news of his death the Tuesday morning of July 23, he could hardly believe it. The deceased had been involved in a car accident some weeks prior to his death, but he died because of his heart condition. The undersigned led the funeral service in the church where he had preached so many years, and Rev. Lubbers led the service at the grave. The funeral message was based on Luke 18: 13, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This was at Rev. Vos's personal request. He had emphasized more than once that if anything characterized his life, it was the truth that he was in himself a hopelessly lost sinner, saved only because of the wonderful mercies of our covenant God.

Rev. Vos is no longer with us. However, he will not be forgotten by us, especially not by those who knew him intimately and personally. We all feel his loss. It is true that he had not been active in the activities of our churches since 1966; but he and his labors among us will not soon be forgotten. He now lives and has received his reward, bestowed upon him and upon all God's people in His sovereign grace. May the God of all mercy comfort his widow and family according to and in harmony with His Word and promise. And may his departure remind us of the truth that life is as a dream when it is past, that we may labor while it is day, before the night cometh when no man can work. And may the Lord give us grace to say with the apostle Paul: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And may we as churches continue to be faithful in the proclamation of the truth, only because of the God of our salvation Who is "merciful to me, the sinner."

Rev. H. Veldman

ATTENTION!

Effective Immediately, the business office of the *Standard Bearer* will be:

The Standard Bearer,
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

Contributions

A Letter From New Jersey

Rev. H.C. Hoeksema
Editor of *The Standard Bearer*

Dear Brother in Christ:

As a true Calvinist committed to our Reformed faith, I am deeply disturbed by what happened at the 1968 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church meeting at Grand Rapids, Michigan this June. Its decisions were characterized by (1) increased compromise on doctrinal defection; and (2) increased ecumenical and social involvement.

In the area of doctrinal defection there was a refusal to make doctrinal pronouncements and the following overtures were denied:

a. Appoint a committee to study in the light of Scripture and the creeds the teachings made publicly by some professors and instructors in the Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland, such as the denial of infallibility of Scripture by Drs. Ridderbos and Berkouwer and the 1967 Lunteren Synod repudiation of the 1926 Synod of Assen, which upheld the historicity of the Genesis record.

b. Clarify the Church's teaching on limited atonement by referring the churches to the Compendium of Christian Religion (approved by the Synod of 1957), Question and Answer 41, which reads, "For whom did Christ die? Christ died for all those whom God in sovereign grace has chosen to be His people." Instead Synod's compromising 1967 decision in the case of Professor Harold Dekker was reaffirmed.

c. Discipline a Calvin College instructor of theology and religion, who in a sermon on Matthew 25: 31-46 stated that the basis for our judgment and salvation is determined by our works (Social welfare) and that faith, orthodoxy, piety and obedience are not essential. This man was white-washed and reappointed as instructor.

d. All those who are teaching at Calvin College and Seminary be forbidden from all teaching contrary to Holy Scripture, such as present day tendencies regarding infallibility of Scripture and a form of theistic evolution which will destroy our historically established Reformed faith and doctrine.

Two significant decisions were made by Synod on ecumenical and social involvement:

(1) Denial of a request by the Tiv Church of Nigeria, Africa (scene of CRC mission) for a Reformed missionary seminary for the training of their ministers. Instead Synod chose to support the ecumenical existing Theological College of Northern Nigeria. This action could ruin the Reformed witness of the flourishing Tiv Church. Which together with sending observers to the World Council general assembly at Uppsala, Sweden is a definite step by the CRC to increased ecumenical involvement.

(2) Social involvement on the race issue. Synod made seven strong deliverances on racism with the proviso that those found guilty of racist practices be dealt with "according to the provisions of the Church Order regarding Admonition and Discipline." In other words, penalties are to be invoked for infractions of the social gospel, but not for the true gospel.

The Orthodox Presbyterian fraternal delegate to the CRC 1968 Synod assured them we need the CRC's heritage of the past, but warned of the dangerous ecumenical encroachments on the world scene. One thing is sure. We do not need the foregoing type trends so sadly evident in the CRC.

Yours ever valiant for truth,

William A. De Jonge,
Montclair, New Jersey

From Our Mission Board

Mission News

Rev. J. Kortering

It is both stimulating and heart warming for members of the Mission Committee to observe how important the work of missions in our churches really is. This comes to

the foreground annually at the time of Synod when the work done in the past year is discussed and evaluated and new mandates are given with a view to future

labors. Much time was spent at Synod in considering this calling which we have. Many lively discussions concentrated upon our work and what must be done. This is encouraging for the Mission Committee not only, but for all our members, for this indicates that the concern of the *churches* rests in this important work. The labors of our Mission Committee must be remembered in our daily and congregational prayers, that the truth of the gospel may go forth in power under the blessing of our covenant God.

Our first committee meeting after Synod was held on June 19. This meeting reflected a new zeal and firm resolve to carry on the work. The officers elected were Rev. M. Schipper — President, Rev. H. Veldman — Vice President, Rev. G. Van Baren — Secretary, and Rev. G. Lubbers — Vice Secretary. The committee is composed of the following members besides the officers: Revs. J. Heys, J. Kortering, and Elders J. Kalsbeek, D. Kooienga, and H. Meulenberg. Elder J. M. Faber was also elected by Synod, but he informed the committee that since he is already serving the churches in a large capacity, he was unable to serve on this committee. The following subcommittees were appointed, Finance Committee: H. Meulenberg and D. Kooienga; Radio Committee: J. Kortering and J. Kalsbeek; Jamaica Committee: J. Heys, G. Lubbers, D. Kooienga, and H. Meulenberg; and the New Policy Committee: H. Veldman, G. Van Baren, M. Schipper, and J. Kalsbeek.

Synod approved the sending of Rev. J. Heys and Mr. T. Feenstra of our Redlands congregation to Jamaica to labor there for approximately 8 weeks. A few finishing details were completed at this meeting, including the extending of our official greetings through our emissaries and each committee member had the opportunity to extend personal greetings via the tape recorder which Rev. Heys took with him to the meeting. These brethren and their wives arrived safely in Jamaica on June 25.

Details of their labors on the island will come from them. According to plans, Rev. Heys looked forward to spending time with the ministers and congregations, each in his own location. Last summer the ministers came together in a central location for certain hours of formal class study; this summer he planned to work with them in their own areas and thus allow a closer fellowship with the members of the churches. By this he will be able to know more specifically the spiritual needs and on what level we have to work with the people. It is a true source of gratitude that there is a good working relationship between the ministers and their congregations and our "missionary pastors" who labor there.

Mr. Feenstra, a builder, has the difficult task of appraising the church buildings and with Rev. Heys making recommendations as to what must be done to help them. Synod took cognizance of the fact that before much money be spent on the buildings them-

selves, we have to secure the land on which these buildings either already are or will be constructed. Since Jamaica is an emerging country, just developing its economic resources, many of the formal aspects of property rights, especially as it relates to the hill country, are also being developed. There are approximately 15 to 20 relatively small congregations affiliated with the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica. Our emissaries have established contact with a retired judge who is willing to handle the legal aspects of securing the properties of these churches. The cost of this amounts to approximately 80 to 100 dollars for each church. This points out the need for careful study before decisions are taken by the Mission Committee. We have about \$1,500.00 in the church building fund, this having been raised to date by collections taken in our churches. If there is no possibility of consolidating these churches into larger congregations, something which still has to be determined, the entire amount could be used up simply in the securing of property from a legal point of view without using any in actual construction. Since we have limited means, perhaps the wisest method would be to secure certain strategically located properties and use some of the money to improve the buildings already constructed on them and increase this as the money becomes available. Since Synod decided to request the churches to take up, once again, four collections this year for the building needs, it must become apparent to all of us that this need is great. Properly constructed government approved buildings are essential to the very existence of these congregations.

Synod also decided to instruct First Church to call a missionary for the specific field of Jamaica. In carrying out this decision, the Mission Committee has submitted a gross list to First Church from which a trio will be made and the Lord willing a missionary called. This gross list includes the following ministers: D. Engelsma, C. Hanko, R. Harbach, J. Heys, G. Lubbers, M. Schipper, and B. Woudenberg. The need for a missionary to labor there full time is great, and our prayers must also arise to God that He will fill this need in His good time.

While First Church proceeds to call a missionary, the Mission Committee is also instructed to contact each consistory for a two-fold reason. The first is to determine whether their minister would be available for going to Jamaica for a period of 6 months to a year to labor there. The second is whether they have any elders or ex-elders who would be available to assist the minister for a like period of time. The purpose of this is that in event no minister accepts the call to labor in Jamaica, that later this year or earlier next year a minister and an elder can be sent to labor for a period of 6 months to a year. All this emphasizes the conviction that we need men for personal labor on the island.

Details concerning the benevolence expended upon the needy on the island will more than likely be

furnished by the Hudsonville deacons. There was approximately \$3,000.00 available for this need and it also appears that this will be more than spent for aiding the poor and sick. The deacons of Southeast church have completed the clothing drive and shipped a good quantity of used clothing to Jamaica. At this writing word has not been received on the arrival; the estimated receiving date however would bring it to the island well within the time span for our emissaries to supervise in its distribution. Even in this we are reminded that the words of Christ, "the poor ye have always with you" are still true for us as churches.

An important part of the Mission Committee's activities also centers in the work of church extension. Thorough reports were received concerning the work done in northwest Iowa — Edgerton, Minnesota area as well as the Pella, Iowa area. We are repeatedly reminded that there are many children of God outside our churches who with us are sincerely concerned with the apostasy that is sweeping over the churches in America. Our Synod of 1965 decided that our approach in lending a guiding hand in the midst of this confusion and darkness must be systematic and organized. This contact is to be made in two areas, first, in those areas in which we already have a church or churches, and secondly, in new areas where as yet we do not have a Protestant Reformed congregation. Essential to the success of any effort put forth in areas in which we have churches is the cooperation of these churches. We must not view the Mission Committee as some super-body who will take over the work of church extension. Rather the committee has the unique position to cooperate with and assist the local congregation. Past experience shows that this works out very well. Pella is a small congregation, and through the means of radio broadcasting public lectures, and the personal labors of Rev. Schipper and others, wider contact has been established with concerned people in that area. The Mission Committee has decided to continue this assist by sending either Rev. Kortering or Rev. Veldman to labor there for 4 Sundays, beginning September 15. The lecture committee of the congregations of Hull, Doon, and Edgerton reports that they also plan to conduct more lectures in that area in addition to the sending out of printed material and the radio broadcast.

Our concern is not limited however, simply to those areas in which we already have churches. We must also reach out into new areas. Still being considered are the contacts that have been made in the eastern part of our country, the New Jersey and Pennsylvania area. Of interest is our recent decision to contact the Consistory of Redlands, requesting them to advise concerning the Bellflower - Artesia and Ripon, California area. Since doing effective work in any of these areas involves a

coordination of radio broadcasting, distribution of literature, lecturing, and personal contacts, much careful study and ground work has to be done.

Synod also felt this need for extending our witness into "virgin" territory and therefore increased the budget for the radio broadcasting to \$9,000.00 and provided monies for expenses incurred in pamphlet distribution and travel. The Mission Committee has authorized the Literature Publication and Distribution Committee to publish and distribute a tract written by Rev. C. Hanko on the subject, "What is truly Reformed."

In comparison to the activities of churches swallowed up in the ecumenical movement, these labors are pitifully small. No doubt we all at times even feel frustrated by our inadequacy in performing the work of church extension and missions. Yet, we must always keep before our minds the true perspective of faith. The preaching of the gospel and the witness to the truth of God's unchangeable word is not determined by man nor by human circumstances. As churches we hold high the banner of the truth of God's absolute sovereignty. While we see around us the inroads of Arminianism and Modernism being dug into the moral fibre of the reformed community, we must not ourselves falter beneath the banner of truth. God forbid that we deem it too heavy a banner to carry.

Rather let us all take courage that the work of gathering the church is in truth the work of our exalted King and High Priest Jesus Christ. Since He does not work apart from His church, but through His church, we must rest assured that His word never returns unto Him void. God will use it to the gathering of His own unto Himself and the leaving without excuse those who willfully walk in apostasy and unbelief.

There is need for ambassadors of Christ. We may be thankful to God that He has provided us with seven young men who aspire to the ministry in our churches and will be studying in our Theological School this fall D.V. This too we believe is an answer to our many prayers that God send us laborers to enter into the field white already unto harvest.

Just as important is the need for the people of God to be spiritually minded. The church that sends forth ambassadors must be the living expression of the body of Jesus Christ. Those who are outside of the body of Christ must see in the members who are already part of that body, that being one with them is most desirable for the salvation of their own souls and the glory of God.

May God give each one of us faithfulness in our respective places in His church, that Zion may be gathered.

But how do we know that God speaks to us personally? The answer is: He speaks to us by His Spirit and thus applies the Word of the gospel to us personally, calling us evermore out of darkness to His marvellous light, and witnessing with our spirit that we are the sons of God. Rom. 8: 16.

— H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," p. 120

A Cloud of Witnesses

BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

Rev. B. Woudenberg

And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. . . .

And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

II Samuel 6:2, 17

From the days when David had first roamed the land of Israel as a soldier of Saul's army, his attention had been attracted to that great city of the Jebusites named Jerusalem. Here was a city in the very center of the nation so impenetrable that to that day they had not been able to dislodge the very limited forces of the Jebusites from it. Instinctively he had been drawn to look upon the city as an ideal location for the capital of their nation, and, even more, as a wonderful setting for the tabernacle of their God. Thus one of his first moves after being fully established as king over all Israel was to move in upon the city and take it for his own. Almost miraculously through the heroism of Joab this was very quickly done.

Into the city David moved to establish his home and his palace there, and at the same time he commanded that a new tent should be constructed for the worship of God in that same city. Actually the proper worship of God had been falling into greater and greater disarray ever since the children of Israel had entered the land of Canaan and especially since the Philistines had taken the ark from the army of Israel at the battle of Ebenezer. In the earlier period it had been primarily a matter of neglect and spiritual decline in the life of Israel; but when the Philistines had won the battle of Ebenezer it appears that they had also continued to march into Shiloh itself where the tabernacle was located and rendered it desolate (See Psalm 78:60-64; Jeremiah 7:12-14). Although the tent itself was spared, it no longer had seemed safe or wise to leave it there, and so it was moved on to Nob. Greatly reduced from its glory, particularly because the ark of the covenant was no more to be found within it, the tabernacle and its worship was nonetheless maintained for those few in Israel who still sought the worship of God with all their

hearts, until, that is, the wrath of Saul fell upon the house of Ahimelech for the assistance which they had given to David. Once again the tabernacle had been taken up and moved, this time to Gibeon, with the result that the worship of God was maintained only in a still more restricted form. Well did the Psalmist later sing, Psalm 78:60,61, "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand."

In spite of this, however, David did not think it well to take the original tabernacle and move it to Jerusalem. Possibly it was because he feared leaving the wrong impression by taking a building as historically important as the tabernacle of Moses out of one of the other tribes into a city found within the territory of his own tribe; and besides this he no doubt already had within the back of his mind plans to build a temple for the keeping of the covenant ark. Thus he merely ordered that a new tent should be built as a temporary residing place for the ark and, calling the representatives of Israel together, spoke to them as follows, "if it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul." (I Chronicles 13:2,3).

By both the representatives of the people and by the people themselves this desire of David was met with great enthusiasm. To those who were true worshippers of God and understood well the ways of Jehovah with His people, it meant that at last the favor of the Lord was fully returned to their nation and the time of

forgiveness for all of their past wickedness was to be fulfilled. And then there were many others too, constituting no doubt the vast majority of the nation, who had very little comprehension of the real spiritual importance of this event but who nonetheless backed the move of David with enthusiasm because they had become enamoured of this their new king and whatever he suggested seemed good.

Nowhere was this message received with greater excitement, however, than in Kirjathjearim, and particularly within the house of Abinadab there. At last it appeared that they were to receive some recognition for keeping the ark of the covenant for these past seventy years. It was not that they had considered the ark to be of such special importance during that time. In fact, it may well have been that their reason for receiving the ark in the first place was merely because they were less fearful than most; and someone had to take it in after the terrible destruction which had fallen upon Bethshemesh after its people had presumed to handle the ark with their hands and even look into it. Few had wanted the ark after that, but the people of Kirjathjearim had dared to take it in, so that for seventy years it had stood practically unnoticed and uncared for in the house of Abinadab. But now, one no less than the king himself had brought it to popular attention again, and the people of Kirjathjearim were ready to take advantage of the attention they were to receive. In fact, they took it upon themselves to make the preparations for the transportation of this prized possession from their town to the new capital city, Jerusalem.

It was an immense gathering of people that came to Kirjathjearim, or Baale of Judah as it was called at that time, to bring forth the ark into the royal city. With David's official company alone there were no less than 30,000 chosen soldiers together with a great company of musicians and many others while the size of the throng of ordinary people who came to watch we can only imagine. The romance and excitement of the event had moved the whole nation until people came from every corner to see and watch, while to the minority of people who really understood, it was like a spiritual pilgrimage.

When at last the great, festive throng arrived at their village, the people of Baale were ready. With imagination they had prepared for the transportation of the ark to Jerusalem. Rather than going back to the law for their instructions, they had thought it most appropriate if they would merely carry through upon the manner of transportation first used for the ark by the Philistines when they had returned to Israel. Carefully they had built a whole new cart of new wood in the latest style of the day, a most appropriate means of transportation, it seemed to them, reflecting their concern for this great ceremony. Then upon the cart they placed two men, Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, men who had grown to maturity under the same roof as the ark and

who were accordingly quite unafraid of it.

How many there might have actually been there that day who realized how far this manner of carrying the ark was from the manner specified in the law we do not know. Surely there must have been some, even if but a few, well enough versed in the traditions of Israel to know that this was not the way it was supposed to be, and it is hard to imagine that David was not one of them. But what was one to do when all the preparations were complete; and the possibility of causing offense was too great. With his implied consent that great company of Israel set out with all eyes upon that holy ark which set there for all to see upon this new cart.

Actually, besides the fact that it was contrary to the law of God, the transportation of the ark by means of a cart was quite inept and impractical. The roads of Israel, and especially those which led through the hill country surrounding Jerusalem, were little more than well worn foot paths which could become very narrow and rough when the going became hard. The result was that very soon the cart upon which the ark rode began to bounce and tip very badly once they had moved outside of the streets of the city. But to the sons of Abinadab, Uzzah and Ahio, this presented no great problem. Already as children they had often touched the ark when it was still in their own home. They had no particular fear, or respect for it either. At the moment the cart began to tip too badly, Uzzah merely reached out his hand to the ark to steady it so that it might not fall. But there was a difference. The longsuffering of God toward the disrespect and indifference reflected in this action once again had gone beyond that which He could endure. There, before the eyes of all and as a lesson to them, Uzzah was struck dead in a moment.

The people were amazed and dumbfounded. For the most part they did not understand what had happened or why. David really knew; but he was angry to think that the Lord should so disrupt this great and well-intentioned ceremony. Rebelliously, he called the whole move to a halt, commanded that the ark should be placed in a nearby house, that of Obededom the Gittite, and returned to his home disappointed and hurting.

Three months passed by before the heart of David gradually returned to a more proper and humble understanding of this event. They were not uneventful months, for during this time David was called upon to turn back two attacks of the Philistine army. But God was with him and gave him a glorious victory, making evident that He had not forsaken His people completely. Finally, there also came to David a report that God was blessing the house of Obededom with whom the ark was being kept. The result was that once again David determined to go and finish bringing the ark to Jerusalem as he had planned.

Once again it was a great multitude that went along to complete this transfer, only this time the crowd was missing many who before had been interested only in

the festivity of the occasion and the whole attitude was much more subdued and much more reverent than it had been at first. The way of the Lord's lesson had been painful and shocking, but it had been extremely effective in bringing through to the people that this was no mere ordinary box which was carried: it was the ark of the covenant through which in typical form God dwelt in the midst of His people. It was a foretaste of God's mercy for His people such as would be realized only in its final form through the coming of Jesus Christ to His people.

The new respect which the people felt for the ark of the covenant was now evident throughout the great ceremony. No longer was there any wooden cart in imitation of the heathen, now the ark was borne upon the shoulders of the Levites as God in his law commanded. Again, no sooner had they gone six paces than they stopped to offer sacrifices in acknowledgment of their own sin and unworthiness. But still the ceremony was not without joy, only now the joy was of a deeper spiritual tone than before. Leading the ark came the king and about it and behind it were the musicians and singers and all of the people. It is thought that as they approached the great city Jerusalem and began to ascend its slopes, that there went up from the lips of the people the words of the 24th Psalm especially written by David,

The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, and sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.

What more fitting figure could there be of Christ entering the New Jerusalem with all those who constitute the true Israel according to the election of our God.

BOOK REVIEW

Prof. H. Hanko

THE GREAT LIGHT, Luther and Reformation; by James Atkinson; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968; 287 pp., \$4.00.

This is Volume IV in the series on Church History entitled "The Advance of Christianity Through The Centuries." The series is edited by Prof. F. F. Bruce. This volume, as its title indicates, deals with the Reformation, including the reformation in Germany, Switzerland, England and Scotland.

We have reviewed other volumes of this series in *The Standard Bearer* and need not enter into a detailed review of the present work. We have found the entire series to be an excellent work of considerable scholarship. It is easy to read and makes the work valuable to those without theological training and without extensive study in the field of Church History.

The book deals extensively with Luther's spiritual and doctrinal development although it gives too important a role to Luther in the Reformation. Consequently the Calvinistic aspect of the Reformation is treated too

sketchily. But for interesting and informative reading the book is hard to beat.

One serious typographical error is an error on the cover which reads: "Volume I: A.D. 1 to 800." This is the second time the printers have made this error in this series. It is really inexcusable.

The book is highly recommended and our readers are urged to purchase it.

ANNUAL R.F.P.A. MEETING

The annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association is to be held Sept. 26 at 8 o'clock in our Hope church.

Only once per year let us all attend this meeting.

The Board (Sec. G. Pipe)

The Hope Prot. Ref. Christian School needs 1 Junior High Teacher for the 1968-69 School year. A teacher that could fill a part-time position would also be considered. If you can fill this need, please contact:

Mr. Clare Kuiper
2450 Boulevard Dr., S.W.
Wyoming, Michigan 49509
LE 4-0098

IN MEMORIAM

Early Tuesday morning, July 23, our heavenly Father called home His servant, our husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather

REV. GERRIT VOS

We are comforted in the knowledge that he was assured of his salvation and that our heavenly Father doeth all things well.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Ps. 116:15

Christina Vos

John & Nellis Poelstra and Family

Pieter & Yvonne Vos and Family

Ben and Marily Zandstra and Family

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere and heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Vos and her family in the recent loss of their husband, father and grandfather, at the age of 73 years.

REVEREND GERRIT VOS

Their loss is also our loss and the loss of all our churches. We acknowledge gratefully to the Lord his leadership and guidance in the many years he served us and our churches. May the Lord comfort the bereaved in harmony with His Word and lead us to look forward to that glory into which he also entered. Matt. 25:34.

Rev. H. Veldman, Pres.

J.C. Lubbers, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The undersigned, societies of our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, wish to express their sincere and heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Vos and her family in their loss of husband, father and grandfather,

REVEREND GERRIT VOS

His leadership in our church will be long remembered. May the Lord comfort the bereaved according to His Word, and may we be prompted to work while it is day before the night cometh in which no man can work.

The Societies of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church

The Heidelberg Catechism Books by Rev. H. Hoeksema have recently been marked down!! Special prices are:

Vol. I	In The Midst of Death	Lord's Day 1-4	\$2.00
Vol. III	The Death of the Son of God	Lord's Day 11-16	2.00
Vol. IV	The Lord of Glory	Lord's Day 17-20	2.00
Vol. V	Abundant Mercy	Lord's Day 21-24	2.00
Vol. VIII	Love The Lord Thy God	Lord's Day 32-38	2.50
Vol. IX	Love Thy Neighbor for God's Sake	Lord's Day 39-44	2.00
Vol. X	The Perfect Prayer	Lord's Day 45-52	2.50
Total			\$15.00

Sale Price of Complete set of Seven Books

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Publicity & Book Committee

ANNIVERSARY

On September 27, 1968 our parents

MR. & MRS. PETER DECKER, JR.

expect to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. We, their children, are thankful to our Covenant God for all He gave us through them. It is our prayer that in their remaining days they may experience the continued blessing of our God. "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life." Psalm 128:5

Rev. & Mrs. Robert D. Decker

Mr. & Mrs. Carl Potjer

Doris Ann Decker

James E. Decker

3 grandchildren

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, Lord willing, on Wednesday, September 4, at the Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minnesota. Classis will convene at 9:00 A.M.

Delegates in need of lodging are to inform the clerk of the Edgerton consistory of their need.

Rev. David J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk
Classis West.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Board of the Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to our fellow board member, Mr. Wm. Corson, in the passing of his mother,

MRS. TENA CORSON

Rom. 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose".

K. Bylsma, President

R.W. Pastoor, Secretary

News From Our Churches

August 14, 1968

Candidate Richard Moore accepted the call he had received from our church in Isabel, South Dakota, providing that congregation with its first minister since their organization. Rev. Lubbers, of Southwest Church, declined the call he was considering, which he had received from Hull, Iowa. South Holland has named another trio, consisting of the Revs. C. Hanco, M. Schipper and G. Van Baren.

* * * * *

The success of the discussion-group meeting in First Church was reflected in this announcement: At the special meeting after the service last Sunday evening those present enthusiastically approved the suggestion of continuing the discussion group meetings at the rate of one per month. The meetings are scheduled for the second Sunday of each month. You are requested to take this into account in arranging your date schedule, or re-arranging this where necessary.

* * * * *

From our Randolph, Wis. church we learn that two of their young men made public confession of their faith Aug. 4; and, that the young people have underwritten the re-upholstering of the 140 seats in the auditorium, with several of the men of the congregation doing the upholstering; and, that volunteer labor also accounted for making repairs on the pastor's garage, and the application of a fresh coat of paint on the parsonage. Randolph has scheduled their 25th Anniversary celebration to be held Aug. 24 at Fond du Lac County Park with a dinner, program, etc., and special commemorative services Sunday, Aug. 25, with two of their former ministers conducting those services. They promised accommodations for their friends in our denomination who would come out to share with them this joyful occasion.

* * * * *

Rev. G. Vos, Emeritus minister of Hudsonville, Mich. entered into his heavenly rest Tuesday, July 23. Funeral services were held in the church Friday, July 26, with the Revs. H. Veldman and G. Lubbers officiating.

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The Pre-Convention Hymn-sing, sponsored by the staff of *Beacon Lights* was held in First Church and drew a splendid crowd of enthusiastic singers. Ron Van Overloop opened the meeting with prayer, and introduced the song leader, Arnold Dykstra. Mr. Dykstra divided the song selections into two groups, The Greatness of God in creation, and, the Greatness of God in our salvation. Special numbers included a tenor solo by Gary Bylsma; a violin solo by Mary Klop, and a trumpet solo by John Hoekstra. Randy Meyer, of the host society, gave a brief run-down of the activities planned for the conventioners, and it sounded like a full schedule, brim-full of physical and spiritual exercises. Ellen Kregel at the piano and Mary Kregel at the

new Wicks organ furnished the accompaniment, and for the offertory they played a beautiful duo arrangement of Psalm 23. Before closing the meeting with prayer Rev. Van Baren invited all those present to come out for the Mass Meeting to be held Friday evening, and to the Convention Hymn-sing the next Sunday evening.

* * * * *

Though Redlands had a taped message from Mr. Feenstra, and Holland had one from Rev. Heys, the only "news" we can give you at this late date is this bulletin news item dated July 21: "During the first two weeks in Jamaica Rev. Heys preached nine times, two of those times were way up in the hills where he had not been before. His schedule called for preaching in Rev. Frame's church ten times, in Rev. Elliott's eleven times and in Rev. Ruddick's nine times. Rev. and Mrs. Heys and Mr. and Mrs. Feenstra slept in five different places the first five nights, but are now settled "at home" for the duration. Their small rented car, with a cartop carrier is able to carry four suitcases, two tape recorders and two accordions, the last mentioned a gift from friends in the States. They found no appreciable progress in church building, but noted a great improvement in the singing of the Psalter songs. The Hope Heralds, from Grand Rapids, have recorded several Psalter numbers for the Jamaicans which should help them learn the tunes, and the accordions will also begin to serve this need. The bales of clothing were expected in Kingston on the 13th of July and would be shipped by rail to Montego Bay where distribution would be made." The next news of this venture will probably be heard from the emissaries themselves as they relate their adventures to our church people.

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The people of Loveland's congregation are enjoying the new seats recently installed in the auditorium. The Aug. 4 bulletin thanked the willing workers who did the work.

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The last church picnic scheduled in our denomination is probably Lynden's, which is to be held on Labor Day.

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Our own High School will open its doors to an enrollment of about 63 students. The Reference Library is being catalogued; the Mothers' Circle has donated an overhead projector for classroom use and also furnished a Thermo Fax copier for office use. Other volunteer supporters have promised furnishings for the teacher's lounge, landscaping, and brick-laying for the brick sign in front of the school. September of 1968 will indeed be a highlight in our history, for now our ministers will be able to get all their education from kindergarten up under Protestant Reformed educators!

. . . . see you in church

J.M.F.